

Sponsor Statement for HB 472

Pawnbrokers/Secondhand Dealers

An Act relating to persons who buy and sell secondhand articles and to certain persons who lend money on secondhand articles.

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When property is stolen, one of the ways the thief can profit from the items they have taken is by selling them to a pawnshop or secondhand dealer. Dealers don't want stolen merchandise in their stores, but it is easy for a thief to appear to be the true and rightful owner of the item in question.

Alaska Statutes require that secondhand dealers, including pawnshops, keep records of the items that they receive and that these records be open to any law enforcement agency that asks to see them. When municipal police or state troopers receive reports of stolen goods they can then match them to the records, helping return stolen items to their rightful owners and identify the thief. Unfortunately, this system requires a lot of time on the part of the officers, and it is not unusual for the property to have been sold by the dealer or pawnshop before it has been identified as stolen.

House Bill 472 addresses this problem by requiring that secondhand dealers and pawnshops provide bi-weekly reports to their local police department or state troopers listing any items they have received that have a serial number, a resale value of \$75 or more, or are sold or pawned in a lot of ten or more, excluding books. This will make the process much more efficient because officers will not have to go to all the individual locations looking for stolen items.

The bill changes current statute to allow records to be kept by computer, and directs the Department of Public Safety to establish a form or format for the bi-weekly reports. The bill also requires that items that a pawnbroker buys from an individual or takes in pawn be held for 30 days to allow law enforcement agencies time to review the reports and identify stolen items.